

The ARRL amateur licensing restructuring proposal is a fair and balanced approach that will insure the health of amateur radio in the U.S. during the 21st century.

To some degree it satisfies those that believe that morse CW is important enough to be retained as a licensing requirement, by retaining it for the Extra Class license. Some hard core CW operators fear that having no CW licensing requirement at all would spell the death of CW. While I do not believe this to be true, it appears that there is a significant portion of the amateur community that feels this way. I respect their opinion and believe that the ARRL proposal is a good compromise on the CW issue.

On the other hand, the proposal recognizes that the world has changed and that morse CW should not be used as a barrier to keep operators off of the HF radio spectrum. By allowing Novice and current Technician operators onto certain HF bands at reduced power levels, the true incentive to upgrade is created. Once they have a taste of HF, they will want more and will try to upgrade.

In addition, the proposal cleans up the licensing structure by reducing the number of license classes. There are too many license classes. Because the FCC ignored a portion of the ARRL's previous proposal and failed to combine classes in the last restructuring, the license class structure is a bit of a mess. We still have Novices, there is still a distinction between Technician and Technician Plus and the old Advanced class license still exists. The ARRL approach is a practical way to eliminate this confusion. Some may be concerned with the automatic upgrading of Advanced class operators to Extra and Technician class operators to General but I believe that this concern is overdone. This would be a one-time event being undertaken to simplify the amateur service. Indeed, the FCC itself would be a major beneficiary by simplifying its record-keeping requirements and keeping costs down.

Overall, I think that the ARRL restructuring approach is a practical way to bring the American Amateur Radio Service into the 21st century. I am an Extra class operator who got his license under the old 20 word per minute code system. The new restructuring does very little for me personally. However, I do recognize that the ARRL restructuring proposal provides great hope of maintaining and growing a healthy amateur radio service. We all benefit from that. I respectfully request that you accept and implement the ARRL proposal. Thank you for your attention.

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